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## THE COLLECTION OF FOLK-LORE IN ENGLAND

*A paper by*

PETER OPIE

*read to the Society on Wednesday, 25th March, 1953,*

*with the Right Honble. Lord Raglan, F.S.A., Past-*

*President, Folk-Lore Society in the Chair*

THE CHAIRMAN: I have much pleasure in introducing to you Mr. Peter Opie, who is chiefly famous I think in that he has, together with his wife, produced the standard work on nursery rhymes; but he has interested himself in other forms of folk-lore, and we look forward with much pleasure to his lecture.

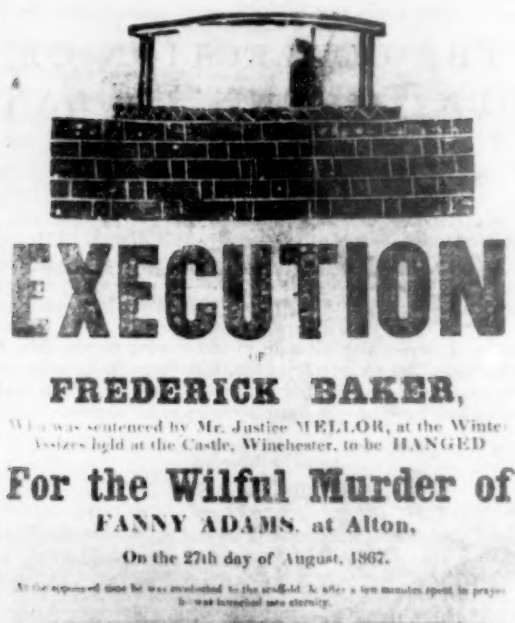
*The following paper, which was illustrated with slides, was then read:*

### THE PAPER

Folk-lore, as I understand it, consists of all the knowledge traditionally passed on from one person to another which is not knowledge generally accepted or "officially" recognized. The game of fivestones, which one child teaches another, is a part of folk-lore; the game of fives, for which agreed rules have been laid down, is not. The legend of Robin Hood is of perennial interest to folklorists; the story of Robinson Crusoe is of none at all. Whether there was ever a real Robin Hood and whether there was ever a real Robinson Crusoe may be questions equally open to speculation, but the background in one case is tradition, in the other literature. The belief that warts can be cured by rubbing them with a piece of raw meat which is then buried in the ground belongs to folk-lore; the belief that they can be cured by rubbing them with a caustic pencil does not. Treating warts with raw meat may, as I have been assured, be just as efficacious as with a caustic pencil, but raw meat is not prescribed by the medical profession. It belongs to the culture of the people, not the surgery.

Folklorists are interested in the embers of an earlier thought and way of life glowing in a period when the unknown bonfire from which they came has long burnt itself out. Perhaps I might give three small but diverse examples of the sort of thing I mean. None of them is significant in itself, but they belong to the district around my home, and will, I hope, show the extraordinary amount of interesting material there must be waiting to be recorded in England as a whole.

The first example is a superstition which I have not come across elsewhere.



*By courtesy of the Curtis Museum*

*Headpiece of the broadside announcing the execution of the murderer of Fanny Adams. The original sheet measures 18 by 7½ ins.*

A local woman refused to hang a baby's napkins out to dry in the moonlight because, she said, she was afraid that the moonlight shining on the napkins would bring bad luck to the baby. Usually bright moonlight is regarded as propitious. 'No moon, no man,' they say in the West Country. A child will not thrive who is born when there is little or no moon. And I would very much like to know how widespread is the present East Hampshire mistrust of the moon.

My second example concerns no more than a name. In a field not far from my house, an eight-year-old girl was murdered by a clerk. A contemporary account says that he tore, hacked, and hewed the body to fragments, and strewed 'the horrid remnants of mortality about the open field', leaving the head itself exposed upon poles. After this the clerk returned to his desk in a solicitor's office and wrote in his diary,

'Killed a young girl—it was fine and hot.'

The only concern which folk-lore has with this unpleasant deed, I am glad to say, is that the little girl's name has become proverbial. It will be known in particular to every serviceman who has eaten tinned mutton, for it was Fanny Adams. What is interesting to see is not only how quickly a new phrase like "Sweet F.A." can enter the life of the nation, but how quickly its origin can be lost. The Supplement to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, and other dictionaries following, give the date of Fanny Adams's death as "c 1810"; while a contemporary broadside preserved at the Curtis Museum, Alton, shows that the murder did not take place until as late as 1867, and I have myself spoken to a man whose father was Fanny's playmate.

My third example concerns what may be the relic of a blood sacrifice. There is ample evidence which can be seen in, for instance, Frazer's *The Golden Bough* that a human sacrifice was sometimes considered necessary on the foundation or completion of a building. It is possible that the rite is echoed in the old, internationally played children's game "London Bridge is broken down". In later times an animal was substituted for a human being, and thereafter a man's shadow, an image, or money, might be substituted. In fact it is possible that the practice of placing coins under a foundation stone is a present-day survival of the custom. A strangely recent example of an animal sacrifice is said to have taken place at Falmouth about 1890, when an addition was being made to a cottage. All building stopped until a virgin hare was caught by a virgin boy and incarcerated in the roof. Miss Margaret M. Howard, F.Z.S., of the Institute of Archaeology, University of London, has been studying this problem and has collected twenty-five examples of dried cats which have been found buried in curious, and usually unnatural postures in the walls or roofs of old buildings.<sup>1</sup> Through the kindness of a neighbour, Mr. G. A. Faithfull, I am able to add to the list a further very interesting specimen discovered only last year.

This cat, together with a rat, was uncovered by Mr. Faithfull when he was renovating a cottage in Chawton, a small village half a mile up the road from Alton. The cottage, known as "Clinkers," adjoins the house where Jane Austen wrote *Mansfield Park*, *Emma*, and *Persuasion*. Until 1951 it was part of the Chawton Estate, owned by Jane Austen's family, and for four hundred and ten years had been occupied by the Clinkers, a family of small farmers and smiths. Mr. Faithfull, whose property "Clinkers" now is, found the cat and rat in a mass of debris above the central beam under the roof, and as he says, what immediately puzzled him was how the creatures got there, for there was no entrance to the

<sup>1</sup> Margaret M. Howard, "Dried Cats," *Man*, vol. LI, 1951, pp. 149-151.



*The Tudor cottage in the roof of which the cat and the rat (above) were found. Beyond the recently erected bus shelter is Jane Austen's house*

roof cavity. It is not my place here to speculate about the significance of the cat, which may, for instance, have been placed there as a kind of semi-mystic vermin scarer, but to suggest that the best chance of understanding such a find is likely to be through the study of folk-lore.

#### PAST HISTORY OF FOLK-LORE STUDY IN ENGLAND

For some reason, in England (where our heritage is so great that we carry it lightly) folk-lore is the Cinderella of the sciences. Despite the general interest there always is in folk-lore, and the men of distinction who have been folklorists, the study of folk-lore has remained like its subject matter, unrecognized in "official" circles. In contrast to Norway, Sweden, Finland, Switzerland, Germany and Austria, there are no departments for the study of folk-lore in any of our universities. No material value is set upon folk-lore research as is set on it, significantly enough, on the other side of the Iron Curtain. And, most regrettably, in England there is little collecting of folk-lore being carried on.

It is, perhaps, surprising that folk-lore receives less attention in this country than in others when one looks at our record in the past. This year 1953 marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the formation in London of the Folk-Lore Society. Like British postage stamps, the only stamps in the world, I believe, not to carry the name of their country of origin (because they were the first postage stamps), the Folk-Lore Society in London is not labelled the "English" Folk-Lore Society, or the "London" Folk-Lore Society, for the very good reason that it was the first society in any country dedicated to its subject.<sup>1</sup>

The word "folk-lore" is itself a British invention. It was coined in 1846 by W. J. Thoms, the founder of the periodical *Notes and Queries*, to replace the cumbersome expressions "popular antiquities" and "popular literature"; and the term has been adopted in a number of European languages.<sup>2</sup>

When Thoms referred to "popular antiquities" the subject-matter which he, and his contemporaries, had in mind was the field covered by John Brand's *Observations on the Popular Antiquities of Great Britain*, a work "chiefly illustrating", as its sub-title explained, "The Origins of Our Vulgar and Provincial Customs, Ceremonies, and Superstitions". This work first appeared in its mature form in 1813 when it was edited by Henry Ellis, Keeper of the Manuscripts at the British Museum. The only other compilations, published before 1846, which could bear comparison, were Hone's *Every-day books*.<sup>3</sup> 1813, however, does not mark the beginning of folk-lore studies in this country. If John Brand's collectings did not suggest the scope of their subject until edited by Ellis, Brand, in his turn, had spent most of his working life annotating and enlarging an earlier work, Henry Bourne's *Antiquitates Vulgares*; or, *the Antiquities of the Common People*, which had been printed as far back as 1725; and an uninterrupted course of folk-lore scholarship can be traced from this work two hundred and twenty-seven years ago to the present day.<sup>4</sup>

It may be noted, nevertheless, that in each new edition of Brand the bulk of the additional material has been assembled not through collection from oral tradition, but from earlier written sources. The first English students of folk-lore

<sup>1</sup> For a full account of the Society's formation see Allan Gomme, *Folk-Lore*, vol. LXIII, 1952, pp. 1-8.

<sup>2</sup> The term was first used by Thoms, under his pseudonym "Ambrose Merton," in a letter to *The Athenæum*, 22 August, 1846, pp. 862-3.

<sup>3</sup> William Hone, *The Every-Day Book*, 2 vols., 1826-27; *The Table Book*, 2 vols., 1827-28; *The Year Book*, 1832.

<sup>4</sup> The collectings of John Brand are still the mainstay of people interested in English traditional practices and beliefs, and a census of the editions which have appeared may prove of use. Brand first reprinted *Antiquitates Vulgares* as *Observations on Popular Antiquities* "with addenda to every chapter of that work: as also an appendix" in 1777. Another edition appeared in 1810. Ellis's first edition, as noted above, appeared in 2 vols. in 1813. Another edition "greatly enlarged", 3 vols., was included in Knight's *Miscellanies*, 1841-42, and a new edition "with further additions", 3 vols., in Bohn's *Antiquarian Library*, 1849. The latter edition was reprinted many times during the rest of the century. In 1869 W. Carew Hazlitt re-edited the work, very poorly, in 3 vols. In 1905 Hazlitt partially atoned for the previous work with his *Faiths and Folk-lore, A Dictionary of National Beliefs, Superstitions and Popular Customs* . . . 2 vols., in which he arranged the material alphabetically. In 1910 the Folk-Lore Society set up a "Brand Committee" to prepare a new edition, and in 1936 began issuing the volumes of *British Calendar Customs* which give numerous regional quotations in amplification of Brand. Eight volumes have so far appeared and one (for Wales) still remains to be done.

were largely antiquarians by profession—people who are notoriously out of touch with contemporary life—and when reading English books of folk-lore we are too often given the impression that all the curiosities described are things of the past.

This is a point I would like to enlarge upon, and to go back even further in English folk-lore writings, to John Aubrey. In the reign of James II, Aubrey, the author of the *Brief Lives*, began setting down a quantity of folk-lore notes (partially as a result of personal observation) in preparation for what was apparently to be an elaborate treatise relating English customs and superstitions to those found in the classics.<sup>1</sup> In his manuscript, which is dated 1686–87, Aubrey describes a number of practices which are commonplace to-day, for instance, saying “God bless you” after someone sneezes, believing that one is being talked about when one’s ear burns, nailing a horseshoe which has been found by chance on to one’s front door, making a hole in the bottom of the shell after eating a boiled egg, and little children singing when it rains,

Raine, raine, goe away,  
Come againe a Saterdag.

But Aubrey himself, more than two and a half centuries ago, believed that he was too late to record much which was of value. One can detect in his notes nostalgia for his youth; the repeated assertion that a belief *used* to be held when he was a boy, with its implication that it was now discarded. He believed that he was too late to record fairy tales.

Before printing, Old-wives Tales were ingeniose: and since Printing came in fashion, till a little before the Civil-warres, the ordinary sort of People were not taught to reade; now-a-dayes Bookes are common, and most of the poor people understand letters; and the many good Bookes, and variety of Turnes of Affaires, have putt all the old Fables out of doors; and the divine art of Printing and Gunpowder have frighted away Robin-good-fellow and the Fayries.

We may doubt whether this was true then, or has been wholly so at any period since. Not ten years have passed, for instance, since a book was published in London seriously attempting to prove that there are still fairy people, and that they can be photographed.<sup>2</sup> Gremlins were prevalent in the last war, just as the presence of angels was attested in the First World War. And as for fairy tales, so far as can be ascertained, nobody, when Aubrey was writing, had yet thought of setting down even the most famous of English stories, “Jack the Giant Killer”.<sup>3</sup>

This feeling that the old lore and traditions are dying out in the particular age in which a person happens to be living, has been constantly expressed by writers who do not remember that “most of the knowledge of mankind for most of the history of mankind has not been in books”. Thus Gilbert White, in a well-known passage, writing from Selbourne in 1776 felt it necessary to preface an account of local beliefs with an apology lest he “should be suspected of exaggeration in a recital of practices too gross for this enlightened age”. He then speaks of two

<sup>1</sup> The MS., which is entitled *Remaines of Gentilisme and Judaisme*, is in the British Museum, and was printed in full by the Folk-Lore Society in 1881.

<sup>2</sup> Edward L. Gardner, *Fairies: the Cottingley Photographs and their Sequel*, 1945.

<sup>3</sup> The earliest known edition of “Jack the Giant Killer” was printed at Newcastle in 1711. The story was in oral circulation long before Aubrey’s time.

medical superstitions of "former times", although admitting that there were still people living in the village who were supposed to have benefited from them in their childhood. The first practice, put briefly, was that of passing an infant suffering from a rupture through the cleft made in a young ash tree. The second was about the supposed therapeutic properties of the shrew mouse. In recent years we have become less certain that we are living in enlightened times, which is perhaps just as well. In 1941, for instance, a correspondent to the Hampshire Field Club recorded that a woman asked her father to let her have a young ash tree large enough to be slit in half while still growing, so that she might pass her baby through the slit to insure it never having convulsions.<sup>1</sup> And in 1952, where I live, which is in Gilbert White's country, a mother refused all medical aid for her child who had whooping-cough, and instead put a dead mouse in her child's shoe. The child got well.

When one examines the history of folk-lore collecting one cannot help being struck by the curious fact that recent collectors have often been more richly rewarded than earlier ones. To take the example of English folk song, in 1792 that earnest searcher Joseph Ritson wrote that he had "frequently heard of traditional songs", but had had "very little success in his endeavours to hear the songs themselves". He doubted that they existed. And even if some few did exist, he felt it was very certain that they had "little pretension to originality" compared with those of other countries.<sup>2</sup> This view was still generally held until late in the nineteenth century, indeed almost until the beginning of the twentieth century. No good collection of English songs had been published, and it was believed that England, unlike Scotland, and unlike every country on the Continent, possessed little traditional song. Even those educated people who lived in country districts were unaware of its existence. "When I have had the good fortune to collect some especially fine songs in a village," Cecil Sharp wrote in 1907, "I have often called upon the Vicar to tell him of my success. My story has usually been received, at first with polite incredulity, and, afterwards, when I have displayed the contents of my note-book, with amazement."<sup>3</sup>

After which it will be enough merely to mention that the recently published *Index of English Songs* contains about 1,200 titles, the bulk of them recorded in the twentieth century.<sup>4</sup> And collecting still continues.

#### FOLK-LORE COLLECTING IN PROGRESS

I sowed the seeds of love,  
I sowed them in the spring,  
I gathered them up in the morning so soon  
when the small birds do sweetly sing,  
when the small birds do sweetly sing.

This is the opening verse of the song *The Seeds of Love* which was recorded

<sup>1</sup> *Papers and Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club*, vol. XV, 1941, p. 122. This practice of passing infants through the cleft of a young growing ash tree has been recorded in many other parts of the country, as has also the belief in the curative properties of mice.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Ritson, *Ancient Songs*, 1792 (misdated 1790), pp. lxxiv-lxxv.

<sup>3</sup> Cecil Sharp, *English Folk-Song: Some Conclusions*, 1907, p. 104.

<sup>4</sup> Margaret Dean-Smith, *An Index of English Songs* (contributed to the Journals of the Folk Song Society and the English Folk Dance and Song Society), 1951.



in Somerset in 1952. It is an example of the work which is quietly being carried on by the British Broadcasting Corporation. The B.B.C. has lately engaged two experienced collectors, Mr. Peter Kennedy and Mr. Seamus Ennis, to work on an almost full-time basis recording folk songs and instrumental music, traditional customs, tales, local speech and dialect, throughout the British Isles. The Corporation also employs special collectors for particular undertakings and the singer of this song, William Squires of Holford was located by Miss Maud Karpeles, Cecil Sharp's friend and co-worker.

As it happens, *The Seeds of Love* was almost the first song collected under the B.B.C.'s scheme, and it will be remembered that, exactly half a century ago in 1903, this was the first song which Cecil Sharp collected from living tradition. He was sitting in a friend's garden in the village of Hambridge, when he heard the gardener there singing quietly to himself as he mowed the lawn.<sup>1</sup> Cecil Sharp seems to have had little idea at that time that there were songs to collect in that district, yet he afterwards found that this one village alone possessed over a hundred.

Miss Marie Slocombe, the B.B.C. Recorded Programmes Librarian, who is in charge of the B.B.C. scheme, modestly stresses its limitations. The Corporation cannot undertake projects which bear no relationship to the programmes which are likely to be put on the air. But the increasing listener interest in traditional materials, and, in particular, the advent of the Third Programme, have immeasurably widened the range of what may be required for programme presentation, and have made this scheme possible. Even so, it is clear that members of the B.B.C. staff cannot spend unlimited time searching out the traditions which should be recorded. What the B.B.C. can, and does do, is co-operate with those who possess the knowledge; and they have been working closely with Leeds University's dialect survey, with the English Folk Dance and Song Society (from whom Peter Kennedy has been seconded), and with the Folk-Lore Society. So far their most valuable recordings have been made in Northern Ireland and in Scotland. In Gaelic they are being offered as much as they can take; some singers seem to have an almost inexhaustible repertoire. In Aberdeen and Banff they have met with particular success, finding that the classic "Child" ballads still live among the people.<sup>2</sup> In England they are conscious that they have as yet hardly scratched the surface, but have been "agreeably surprised" by what they have found; for instance, the Midgley Pace-Egg, performed at Hebden Bridge, near Halifax, which they recorded last Easter.

Here is part of the play, where the doctor enters:

*Doctor:* Here am I.

*Fool:* Are you the doctor?

*Doctor:* Yes, that you may plainly see

By my art and activity.

<sup>1</sup> For full account see A. H. Fox Strangways and Maud Karpeles, *Cecil Sharp*, 1933, pp. 33-34.

<sup>2</sup> This is to say, the ballads assembled by F. J. Child in his standard collection *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, 1882-1898, all of which were from written sources. The tradition of singing them was believed to have ceased.



*Fool:* What is your fee to cure this poor man?

*Doctor:* Ten pounds is my fee, but, Jack, if thou be an honest man, I'll only take five to thee.

*Fool:* (*Aside*) You'll be wondrous cunning if you get any!

(*Aloud*) Well, how far have you travelled in doctorship?

*Doctor:* From Italy, Titaly, High Germany, France, and Spain. And now I'm returned to cure disease in Old England again.

*Fool:* So far and no further?

*Doctor:* Oh, yes, a great deal further.

*Fool:* How far?

*Doctor:* From the fireside cupboard upstairs and into bed,  
Where I eat my cheese and bread,  
That make my nose and cheeks so red.

*Fool:* What diseases can you cure?

*Doctor:* All sorts.

*Fool:* What's all sorts?

*Doctor:* The itch, the stitch, the palsy, and the gout.

If a man gets nineteen devils in his soul,

I can cast twenty of them out.

I have in my pocket crutches for lame ducks,

Spectacles for blind hummer-bees, and pack-saddles or broken-backed mice.

I cured Sir Harry of a hang-nail almost fifty-five yards long,

So, surely, I can cure this poor man.

Here, Jack, take a little out of my bottle,

And let it run down thy throatle,

And if thou be not quite slain,

Arise, Jack, and fight again.

I think that those who have heard the recording will agree that no ordinary reading of the text can suggest the feeling and dramatic power conveyed by the actual Yorkshire voices of the young "Pace-egggers."

Now in any good collecting scheme four types of documentation are required:

(i) the text of the traditional matter itself, recorded either on paper or disc;

(ii) a detailed description of the setting in which the tradition was found; (iii) a



*Opie collection*

*Cover of Walker's Otley printing of The Peace Egg (c. 1850). The complete series was of five plays, sold at a penny each*



*By courtesy of the Halifax Courier and Guardian*

*The doctor tending his patient in the Midgley Pace-Egg (1952). The players take great pride in the preparation of their costumes, and an old photograph shows that sixty years ago the method of dressing was the same as it is to-day*

pictorial record, particularly when the subject is a custom; (iv) such evidence as exists about the history of the tradition.

It happens that with the Midgley version of the Pace-Egg these requirements have been satisfied. We have the text recorded. We have a detailed description of its presentation by Mr. H. W. Harwood, a prominent Yorkshire journalist and local historian, who has been associated with the play all his life.<sup>1</sup> We have a number of photographs. And although, as Mr. Harwood has pointed out, the Midgley Pace-Egg was regarded as so ordinary a thing in the nineteenth century that it does not appear to have been mentioned in any letters or diaries, we do have a version of the text, locally printed about 1850, which seems to have had considerable influence in standardizing the play in that part of the West Riding.

A more modest collecting scheme, of a type which might readily be imitated in other parts of the country, has been organized by the Shropshire Local History Council. This survey, which is, of course, purely a local one, has been in operation for two years. The moving spirits are Mr. J. L. Hobbs, F.L.A., F.R.Hist.S., who is Shrewsbury Borough Librarian, and Mr. Donald Moore, B.A., the Council's Hon. Secretary. Their records, which also deal with local history, so far chiefly consist of the primary source of all folk-lore collecting, the personal recollections

<sup>1</sup> H. W. Harwood and F. H. Marsden, *The Pace-Egg: The Midgley Version*, n.d. [1935].

of the collectors themselves. But by the end of last year they had obtained one or more correspondents in about a hundred of the county's 252 parishes; and once one has obtained a competent representative in every parish or village in a county one certainly has a basis for many types of investigation.

Such an arrangement, covering the whole country, seems to be the ideal of the Standing Conference of Local History set up four years ago. This body has the backing of the National Council of Social Services which possesses intimate ties with the villages, through financing village halls, and similar work. The Conference encourages the formation of county Local History Councils (we have one just being formed in Hampshire), and it seems to me, as one who has already had the assistance of these Councils in folk-lore collecting, that if the movement continues to expand it may eventually be able to make a valuable contribution to the study of English local life.

Last year the Shropshire local historians linked up with a more ambitious scheme which aims at surveying the central borderland of Wales, principally Radnorshire, Montgomeryshire, and Shropshire. The prime movers in this venture are Mr. R. T. Rundle Clark, M.A., Senior Staff Tutor in the Extramural Department of the University of Birmingham, and Mr. Alwyn Rees, M.A., Director of the Extramural Department of the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth. The plan here is that collecting shall be done not only through individual enquiries, but at the conclusion of lectures on folk-lore topics arranged by the Extramural Departments. For a start research is concentrating on Proverbs, Children's Games, Agricultural Lore, and Calendar Customs. Two week-end courses for potential collectors have been held at Attingham Park, the Shropshire Adult College, near Shrewsbury, where the local studies tutor concerned is Mr. M. M. Rix, M.A., a keen folklorist. If the extramural departments can get sufficient backing they hope to develop the scheme considerably. This method of collecting is novel, and it will be interesting to see how the experiment works out.

Another active local collecting body is the gallant Oxfordshire and District Folk-Lore Society which for four years now has published a small but high quality *Annual Record* of contemporary collecting in its area. Like everyone else, their activities are restricted by lack of funds; but they are fortunate in having as officers two of the very few full-time folklorists in this country, Mrs. Ellen Ettlinger and Miss Christina Hole.

The Folk-Lore Society itself, one of whose original tenets in 1878 was to collect and print "those scattered notes on the popular superstitions, legends, and ballads, which are almost the only traces of the primitive mythology of our islands", publishes a 64-page illustrated quarterly which always includes a section of "Collectanea," although taking all the world as its field. The Society has also issued forty-nine special volumes, most of them, including the well-known County series, concerned with British folk-lore. Nevertheless, the Folk-Lore Society, which has recently been expanding, is conscious that it has reached a stage in its work where progress is being held up for lack of field work. It has a sub-committee, at present sitting, which is studying the problems of contemporary collection, but is more or less ham-strung from the start by having insufficient funds at its command to organize even voluntary workers. In the old days there

were men and women with sufficient independent means to allow them to spend their lives, sometimes, in assembling the raw material so necessary for scholarship. These people do not exist any more; with the result that scholars and students today merely have the same ageing material to work upon year after year.

It may be that this state of affairs is becoming recognized in academic circles. In London, both University College, which is also the headquarters of the Folk-Lore Society, and King's College, are exploring the possibility of setting up folk-lore archives under their Departments of English; and of securing a student who, if a grant could be obtained, might eventually be able to take over the more general work of organizing an English folk-lore archive. Something similar, although wider in scope, has recently been successfully started by the School of Scottish Studies at Edinburgh University.

When, however, we come to seek an example of how a national folk-lore survey can be carried out, English folklorists have to do no more than make a night's motor-vessel journey to Dublin. In Dublin the Irish Folk-Lore Commission, under the direction of Professor J. H. Delargy, has been collecting and studying the folk-lore of Ireland for more than a quarter of a century. The Commission receives an annual grant of £11,500 a year, and employs fifteen full-time workers, about half of whom are constantly collecting in the field, equipped with recording machines. The situation in Ireland is not entirely analogous to that in England, for the Commission's principal task has been recording the songs and traditions, and especially the stories, preserved in the Irish language; and there is no doubt that but for the Commission a whole culture might have been lost, for the language is a dying one. Collecting, however, is carried on in English-speaking areas as well as Irish, and the quality of what is being collected may be judged by, for instance, the recent series of broadcasts in the Third Programme.

The particular reason my wife and I wanted to see the results of Professor Delargy's work was to find out how the games and traditions of Irish children compared with those of British children. My wife and I are conducting a specialized survey, covering England, Scotland, and Wales by a representational or "sampling" method, which is attempting to find out what traditional games children still play, and to what extent the oral lore current in the youth of their grandparents continues to pass amongst them in the present day. In Dublin, we found that in 1937-38 Professor Delargy, through the Department of Education, had tapped the knowledge of every child in the Republic attending National Schools; and I think that this affords an illustration of the advantage of having a recognized institution for the collection of folk-lore. But I must insert a word of caution. The collection and interpretation of folk-lore, as I have been trying to suggest in this paper, is not something which can profitably be studied in one's spare time, fitted in with other interests. Folk-lore, like many other sciences, is one in which it may take a lifetime's assembly and arrangement of minute facts before any pattern or sense can be discerned. Yet the material which a folklorist studies is not cut-and-dried; it is deep and human, occasionally intimate, and sometimes held in private awe. Professor Delargy rightly attaches little value to

what has been mass collected compared with what has been collected individually. I was impressed over there by the obvious respect in which the Commission holds the countrymen who are its sources. And one could see that this respect was mutual. Professor Delargy happened to remark, "The people like telling us their tales and singing their songs; they are glad to find somebody at last appreciating what they have appreciated for so long." Cecil Sharp, by the way, seems to have been another to whom country folk found it a pleasure to show their skill. Worth-while folk-lore collecting can only be conducted in a wholly personal and modest manner; and I am sometimes a little concerned by the sound of University schemes where it appears to be expected that the material will flow in like census forms. It will, I suspect, only be superficial material which is collected. To the good folklorist, the person who is his source is every bit as important as the information he learns, for folk-lore is but an aid to the study of humanity.

## POETRY OF FOLK-LORE

I suggest that we in England should aspire to have a Folk-Lore Commission (not necessarily as ambitious a Commission as the Irish have, but one which might, perhaps, allow one or two workers to organize the collecting and arrangement of our traditional lore on a national basis), and I am wondering how to reply in a few words to the inevitable question, "What is to be gained from collecting folk-lore?"

I remember sitting in Professor Delargy's manuscript room, browsing in some of his 2,424 bound volumes of collectings, and feeling that I was peering into the very soul of Ireland, for these volumes contained the stories, customs, and beliefs which have kept the Irish company for centuries. And I thought how one day the social historian of Ireland would bless this place, and how one day a poet would rejoice in it.

To me there is an even greater reason for collecting folk-lore than the acquisition of knowledge: there is the occasional gold, literary gold, which may be mined. Auden tells us that the best definition of poetry is "memorable speech"; and the language of the unsophisticated—who are instinctively conservers—echoes with the memorable speech which has appealed to the minds of previous generations. The so-called articulate section of our community is becoming so obedient to book lore that it is losing its relish for the spoken word. Our Piccadilly playwrights often seem to have fewer epithets to their tongue than a ditch digger. "You be silly twice a year, and that is summer and winter", they say in our part of Hampshire. "You have as much need of that as a toad has of side pockets." "Spring has come when a maid can set her foot on seven daisies at once." "I crept so close to them that I could hear everything but the noise of their hair growing."

Again, the true riddle, which describes one object in terms of another, is nothing if not the essence of poetic expression. Our ancestors esteemed riddles, which at one time took a significant place in their thought. Now they are outmoded, and their imagery is kept alive only in quiet places. The other day a correspondent told us that a riddle had come to her family by way of a strange middle-aged woman, with a tame crow on her arm, who had called at her house one stormy

night and asked for lodging. She had reached the village by way of a rough and lonely country lane, no one knew whence. The riddle the woman propounded was:

Who was the oldest whistler,  
And what tune did he whistle?

The answer she gave was that the oldest whistler was the wind, and the tune it whistled was "Over the hills and far away." I suggest that this strange woman's mind was probably better stocked with poetic phrase than that of many a teacher of English.<sup>1</sup>

And what poetry folk-lore has to offer about the wind, the great creature of the riddlers which "flies high and flies low without wings", travelling "by day and by night and never getting tired," taking "without hands," and passing "before the sun without ever making a shadow"! Even the minds of infants can be stretched with the nursery rhyme Dorothy Wordsworth knew, a verse which can, perhaps, be set beside some of the best of her brother's:

Arthur O'Bower has broken his band,  
He comes roaring up the land;  
The King of Scots, with all his power,  
Cannot turn Arthur of the Bower.<sup>2</sup>

Or we may listen to children, chanting in their skipping ropes:

The wind, the wind, the wind blows high,  
The rain comes scattering down the sky.  
She is handsome, she is pretty,  
She is the queen of the Golden City;  
She goes courting, one, two, three,  
Please to tell me who is he?

Or attend to the old folk, who can do what the King of Scots cannot do, and change the wind's direction:

Put a clout above a clout  
And that will turn the wind about.

Other folklorists will be able to point to other and weightier reasons for a folk-lore survey: ethnological and linguistic considerations; the problems of our cultural relationship to the rest of Europe; and, too, the contribution which we should make to the studies already in progress on the Continent. I am stressing merely the side of folk-lore which gives me the most pleasure. The study of folk-lore brings one closer to the mystery and rhythm of life. These phrases and verses and traditions may not be poetry, but they are the stuff of which poetry is made. In this country we, the educated, spend thousands of pounds on hot house plants like Covent Garden opera, and we are losing something. We are ignoring the wild flowers of art which grow free on the wayside, and may be picked for the price of a bus ticket.

<sup>1</sup> I quote this riddle in particular because it is one, as I say, which was sent us the other day; and it is one of a number which our collectors have gathered which do not appear in Professor Archer Taylor's monumental catalogue *English Riddles from Oral Tradition* (1951), containing one thousand, seven hundred and forty-nine riddles, and we may be justified in supposing that until now "Who was the oldest whistler?" has never appeared in print.

<sup>2</sup> Iona and Peter Opie, *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*, 1951, pp. 57-58.

## DISCUSSION

THE CHAIRMAN: Those who are members of the Folk-Lore Society will probably have some idea of what my views are on the subject of folk-lore. They are, in short, that folk-lore has really nothing to do with folk. Folk-lore is what was the learned lore of past days. That is to say, what the so-called folk think and do now is what the influential people in the country did a hundred, two hundred, or perhaps two thousand or even more years ago. Every piece of folk-lore is old, and it is old because it has come down to the folk through long sources, through historical channels. The old folk-songs were not made by the folk, they were made by the King's minstrels and people like that: they were taken to the countryside by returning soldiers or other persons, and those of them that were sufficiently popular, that is to say, simple, were retained by the country folk and handed on from one generation to another, often with extremely little change; and what applies to folk songs applies equally to folk dances and to all other forms of folk culture.

Now, Mr. Opie attempts a definition of folk-lore, and he says it "consists of all the knowledge traditionally passed on from one person to another which is not knowledge generally accepted or 'officially' recognized". I can illustrate his definition by taking the example of witchcraft. Witchcraft nowadays is folk-lore, I do not think anybody will dispute that, but of course in the 17th century it was far from being folk-lore, it was officially recognized. I think we can say that witchcraft was turned into folk-lore by Act of Parliament, that is to say, by the Act of Parliament in which witchcraft ceased to be an offence.

MISS M. A. MURRAY (President of the Folk-Lore Society): I think that as a basis for the study of folk-lore one must remember that it is the intimate life of the people of every class which is not recorded in history or in any other way, and it comes down to us from the common people, who have, as Lord Raglan has remarked, taken it from the more educated. At the present day there is a great deal of folk-lore still going on. One of the chief amusements of the educated classes is crosswords—you have only got to travel in a train to find several people doing them: that is a form of folk-lore. It will probably go down to the working classes in time, but at present it is a form of folk-lore belonging to the upper classes, the educated classes.

I also think Mr. Opie has stressed the collecting of folk-lore that the folk-lore societies had to do, because no subject can be advanced until the facts have been collected. Now that there are a great mass of facts, I think it is time for somebody, and more than one person, to get those facts into some sort of order so that we may realize what folk-lore is, and the enquiry must not be confined to one country only. We must try to understand the movement of certain customs from one country to another. I have been very much struck, as an Egyptologist, at the number of contacts that there seem to be between the west of Europe and the eastern Mediterranean. For example, in the eastern Mediterranean at about 1400 or 1500 B.C., one of the methods of installing the king was by anointing the body with oil. That has been brought in Christian times from the East over to the West. It is that sort of contact that I think one wants to find, and try to trace, if it comes from the East, right across Europe. It is a subject which would require a great deal of study, but no subject is worth while unless you do study, unless you give up your time to it.

The collections, of course, are absolutely necessary, and there is a great deal more to collect, I hope that will go on. But we also want someone to co-ordinate those collections as much as possible.

About the cat: I am a devotee of cats on three counts: I am an old maid, an Egyptologist, and a writer on witches. The cat is a most curious animal, and I think for that reason it has been always subject to a variety of treatments, very often



tortures; but also, in Egypt, it was worshipped, and I think part of the worship was due to its being a very active animal which killed snakes. At the present day among the Mau Mau, when they are going to murder, or attempt to murder, one of their own people, they put up outside that person's dwelling two palm branches made into an arch, and hang from the point of the arch an eviscerated cat: that is a sign that murder is coming. That again is a curious thing: why a cat? I could not tell you. Psychology must be studied because folk-lore is, as I have said before, the intimate, unrecorded, life of the people.

THE LECTURER: Perhaps I might say that I am hoping some other people will suggest more reasons than I have for studying folk-lore. There are a number of practical reasons; some of them, I think, should interest even a government department. One of them is the spread of rumour. I do not think that we in this country have tried to understand how rumour spreads, even if we know where it starts from, or why it is believed, sometimes more than the written word.

I have noticed that the great mass of the people tend to believe in a thing which they hear orally more than in a thing which they read in a book—with educated people, of course, it is the other way round—but the majority, as I say, chiefly take notice of the things they hear in conversation. One of the processes my wife and I have been able to watch in our study of school-children is the way in which certain oral rhymes travel about the country. It is astonishing how quickly some new rhyme or parody will travel around Britain, and in a matter of months seem to be known to every schoolchild in the land. I do think that eventually this sort of study will help us to know how public opinion is formed. It seems to me to be a practical example of the advantage of studying folk-lore.

MISS M. KARPELES: I cannot accept unchallenged the remarks of the Chairman that folk-lore is merely the product of the educated classes in a past age, at any rate so far as folk music is concerned. If this were so and we were to deny to the folk any creative faculty, how could we account for the fact that we can find in the same region many different versions of a song and all equally good? A "composed" song remains static, but a folk song, being dependent for its existence on oral transmission, is always in a state of flux. These variations spring from the creative impulse of the individual and, combined with continuity of tradition and the selection of material which is prescribed by the community, give to folk music its particular character. We know that certain folk songs were originally composed songs but after they have been submitted to the process of oral transmission for a number of generations they become transformed into the folk idiom, and when we find several different versions of the same song and all of supreme beauty—this applies especially to the music—we cannot deny to the folk the powers of artistic creation.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is rather difficult to answer that without giving a special example. One thing that happens is that the people, when they come in contact with some song containing words or ideas with which they are unfamiliar, do undoubtedly translate them into familiar terms. If that is originality they do possess it to that extent. I do not think it is surprising that people are not original. I know the words and the music of, I dare say, several hundred songs, but I have never composed a line of a song, or a note of a song, in my life, and my belief is that only one person in a million is not in the same position. A person who makes a contribution to literature or art in any significant form is extremely rare. Why people should suppose that in any village one is likely to find dozens of people possessing talent which one will not find in the universities is incomprehensible to me.

MISS ANNE MONRO: I think the explanation Cecil Sharp offered for there being so many versions of the same tune, was that A starting it, or having adopted it from

a higher class, passed it on to B, and so on, until it reached Z. During this process, it became gradually purged and underwent considerable alteration, to the extent that if A were to hear Z's version, he might fail to recognize it.

THE LECTURER: What I think Lord Raglan feels, and I know I feel, is that on the whole the song tends to deteriorate rather than improve; but I know the English Folk Dance and Song Society does not necessarily agree with that.

MISS C. CAMPBELL THOMSON: Might I very diffidently go back to the beginning of Mr. Opie's lecture about the superstition of the countrywoman who would not hang out the baby's napkins in the moonlight? Mr. Opie and I are old friends and he knows that I approach the subject from a rather different angle to his. I should like to suggest that perhaps the old woman herself has got her traditional history slightly mixed, in that it is under the dark of the moon, the waning moon, that is an evil influence on small children, as anybody who has studied the moon goddess and the moon goddess history knows. I think perhaps she is passing on something which is folk-lore but which is perhaps inaccurate in its basis.

THE LECTURER: Folk-lore is, of course, often inaccurate even as folk-lore. It is no good looking at a particular superstition and drawing conclusions from the one superstition, or whatever it is, on its own, because it may have acquired entirely the opposite significance to what it originally had. One example I can think of is that children at the moment have a formula with bus tickets for finding out who they are going to marry, and whether they are going to have good luck, which they employ with a rhyme which was originally applied to magpies. Most city children to not nowadays see magpies, but they often see bus tickets, and they use a magpie rhyme in connection with them. That is an example of how, the whole time, there is a process of corruption, or adaptation, going on, and shows how impossible it is to make a deduction from a single piece of evidence. One has to approach each problem from three angles: firstly, one must collect as many examples as possible over as wide an area as possible; secondly, one must look at as many previous records for as far back as possible; and thirdly, one must examine parallel cases. Perhaps I might add here that although a lot of collecting has been done in the past, and although I know a great deal more work needs to be done on what has already been collected, I am impressed by how much collecting remains undone. My wife and I have had a survey going for only two years. When we started we thought there was not very much to collect, but we are swamped with it. School-children will not only preserve the majority of the games and traditions which have been recorded in the past, they appear to have more traditional games now than they used to have. I say "appear" because we cannot be certain. We cannot tell what was their extent in the past, because they were ever adequately recorded.

MISS M. TARRANT: I should like to point out that outside the universities, and outside the Folk-Lore Society, there is a certain amount of collection of folk-lore material being collected. I work with an organization known as Mass Observation which was founded some fifteen years ago with the primary object of studying the opinions and the behaviour of people in a so-called civilized country. It was founded by Thomas Harrison, who had previously worked as an anthropologist in various parts of the world studying the habits of so-called uncivilized people. We have tried in a small way, and so far as our finances have allowed us to do so, to study the behaviour of the British people, rather along anthropological lines, and I do feel that some of the work we have done—which we have not really so far tried to relate in any very decided way to any university studies of any kind—has followed very much the sort of line that has been described this afternoon. For example, we have tried to study various superstitions which appear to have grown up in our own times, superstitions attached to fairly modern practices like speedway racing, dog racing, and various waves of fan

hysteria, of which the attention paid to Johnny Ray, the crying crooner, is the latest example in this country. During the war we tried to study the spreading of rumours, and we have tried to carry that on in peace-time. We are particularly impressed by the way in which rumours fly about the country, in advance, sometimes, of the official channels of communication, even in an age when one might least expect it.

We are at the moment engaged in trying to study reactions to the coming Coronation as an official ceremony, and are also trying to find out what unofficial "folk-lore" reactions there may be among ordinary people. However, I do not want to give a lecture about what we are trying to do, but I simply wish to say that I feel we are working along very much the same sort of lines, as those denoted here.

THE LECTURER: I have, in fact, had the privilege of using some of the material which Mass Observation have collected and they are certainly coming very near to studying folk-lore. But folk-lore is something more than social behaviour. What a person customarily does in a pub, when, for instance, he treats somebody to a drink who has treated him to a drink, is not folk-lore; it is social behaviour. But when the barmaid refuses the five shilling piece he offers, that is not social behaviour; it is folk-lore!

MR. G. F. MORRELL: Folk-lore is one of the departments of learning that should be encouraged, because it may be said to be a handmaid of history. The spectacle of that rat and that cat reminds me that the same things existed at one time in Egypt; as Dr. Murray has pointed out, the Egyptians venerated the cat—and apparently it is the result of folk-lore. In Italy and with many of the maritime people of ancient and medieval times, it was not the cat that they venerated but the serpent. Dr. Murray has pointed out that cats were venerated in Egypt; doubtless because of their value in exterminating serpents and other vermin. When we come to a town like ancient Pompeii, anyone who rambles through that town would be surprised to see what a large number of representations of serpents there are. There is no doubt that these resulted from a folk-lore which grew up through the ages in these maritime towns, which perpetuated for the succeeding generations, at a time when there was not much writing or learning such as we know it, this tradition of the value of the serpent. What was the result? When we trace it to its destination, we find that the serpent was worshipped because of its power, the power that no other animal possessed, of exterminating the greatest enemy of the peoples of those times—the rat. Instead of using cats in these maritime cities of Italy to destroy serpents, they venerated the serpents as a result of their folklore and used them wherever they could.

THE CHAIRMAN: Serpent worship is a thing that we cannot start on now. It had, as a matter of fact, nothing to do with the eating of rats by serpents: it is pretty clear that serpent worship was due to the belief that when the serpent sheds its skin it starts a new life and that it is, in fact, a symbol of immortality, and not because it was a rat-eater.

I think it is time now that we brought this meeting to a close. I should like before I do so to express our indebtedness to Mr. Opie, to say how heartily I agree with him that more work on the collection of folk-lore should be done, if folk-lore is what I think it is. If it is I think that it is created by processes that can be traced; it is diffused by such processes, and it dies out again through such processes. It is a most valuable item in the history of our civilization. If, as is ordinarily believed, it may happen anywhere at any time, it has no scientific value whatsoever.

I would like to conclude by mentioning one very valuable book on the subject. Mr. Opie mentioned Mr. Alwyn Rees of Aberystwyth: if you do not know his *Life in a Welsh Countryside* I think you have missed a very valuable contribution to folk-lore. It is the sort of study we want for other parts of this country.

*The vote of thanks was carried with acclamation: and, another having been accorded the Chairman, the meeting ended.*

# COLONIAL UNIVERSITIES TO-DAY

*The Thomas Holland Memorial Lecture by*

*WALTER ADAMS, C.M.G., O.B.E.,*

*Secretary of the Inter-University Council, delivered  
to the Commonwealth Section of the Society on  
Thursday, 23rd April, 1953, with the Right Honble.*

*Lord Hemingford, M.A., in the Chair*

THE CHAIRMAN: The lecture that we shall be privileged to hear this afternoon is the second Thomas Holland Memorial Lecture. The Holland Memorial Trust was set up by Lady Holland, whose absence this afternoon we much regret, in memory of her husband, to promote interest in the industrial or educational development of the Commonwealth and Empire, or any part of it.

There may be some of you who, like myself, had not the honour of knowing Sir Thomas Holland, but the bare outlines of his distinguished life of service show what an appropriate memorial to him is a lecture on the subject of Colonial universities. As a distinguished scientist, as a servant of the Empire overseas, in India, where he was a member of the Viceroy's Council, and last but not least, as Chairman of the Council of this Society, he would have rejoiced in this subject, and we who did not know him would wish to join with those who have a more personal remembrance of him in congratulating Sir Selwyn Selwyn-Clarke and his colleagues in the Commonwealth Section of this Society in having chosen so fitting a subject.

The lecture, as you know, was to have been given by Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders, a member of the Inter-University Council, who was a member of the Asquith Commission on higher education, the report of which in 1945 marked such an epoch in the development of universities in the Colonies, and we are distressed that illness should have prevented him from giving his lecture. I know that you would wish a message of sympathy and good wishes to be sent to him.

Casualties of this kind are a feature of Colonial education, and much resource is shown in meeting them, but never, I think, was any gap more triumphantly filled than this one, for we have no less a person than Mr. Walter Adams kindly taking the place of Sir Alexander.

Mr. Adams has himself been a university don; he has, since its inception, been the Secretary of the Inter-University Council; he has been Secretary also of the Colonial University Grants Advisory Committee, and he has visited all the Colonial universities. Therefore, he has been closely associated with the high strategy and the provision of munitions, and the actual fields of this great campaign in Colonial education. That is why I say that this breach has been triumphantly filled—I almost said gallantly, but I decided that that word would not do, because some of us have had experience of gaps being filled by people who knew nothing about the subject confronting them. In Mr. Adams we have someone with deep, intimate, up-to-date knowledge of the subject, and I have great pleasure in asking him to speak to us on Colonial universities to-day, and in doing so to thank him for his great kindness in accepting this invitation at extremely short notice.

I have great pleasure in asking Mr. Adams to address us.

*The following lecture was then delivered:*

## THE LECTURE

I feel deep regret at the absence of Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders, not only for the many obvious reasons that any substitute feels regret, not only for the reason also that he is away because of illness, but because of one much more serious. This is a great story, a very important story, and it would be sad if full justice were not done to it. Sir Alexander is a master of the subject and would have done it full justice, and if I fail to convey to you the importance of the story, of its interest, the failure is mine and not that of the story itself.

Sir Alexander has been connected with this work in the whole of its most recent phase of development. He was a member of the Asquith Commission, which was appointed in 1943 and reported in 1945; as you know, most Commissions depend on the activities of a small minority of their members, and it is no secret that he was one of the key members who contributed a great deal to the thought and to the final drafting of that masterly report. He was Chairman, since its beginning in 1945, of one of the key bodies in London, the Senate Committee of the University of London for Higher Education in the Colonies, and has chaired that body with immense skill and statesmanship for these past six and a half years. He was a member of the Inter-University Council for Higher Education in the Colonies; its Vice-Chairman, and, for the past two years, its Chairman. He was Chairman of the Commission of University Education in Malaya and, most recently, he has been Chairman of the Commission on Higher Education in Central Africa.

To substitute for a man of that experience would terrify anybody, and certainly terrifies me. I do apologize if I do not make the story as full and as complete as he would have done.

He was to talk about Colonial universities to-day, and I shall certainly keep to that subject, but as an ex-historian I cannot help glancing back a little, because it would be false to imply that the story begins after the last war. There is a great history of university education, of higher education, in the Colonies, running back for two centuries. Looking backward one sees the vision of Sir Gordon Guggisberg in the Gold Coast; his picture of Achimota, all that it was to be and all that it has, in fact, turned out to be. There was the vision of Lord Lugard in Hong Kong, who planned and founded the University of Hong Kong in 1911. There was Kitchener, who, almost immediately after the battle of Omdurman was to found the Gordon Memorial College in Khartoum, now the University College of the Sudan. Before that there was the vision of Raffles who, when he founded Singapore, knew that it would be a possible site for a university, as it has since become. There was Fourah Bay College, founded in 1827 in Sierra Leone, which supplied almost the whole of West Africa with its leaders for the past 150 years. Further back still is Codrington College in the West Indies, founded in 1710. So that if we concentrate this afternoon on looking at the Colonial universities to-day, we must remember that behind them lies nearly two centuries of precursors, and we are only talking of the latest phase.

The present story begins with the Asquith Commission's report in 1945. That Commission, appointed in 1943, was to advise on the principles on which higher education in the Colonies could be developed, as soon as the opportunity occurred after the war, for the next Colonial development phase. Simultaneously with the publication of that report there was published a report by one of its Committees, the Irvine Committee, which made a detailed plan for higher education in the West Indies, and a separate Commission, under Colonel Walter Elliot, reported on higher education in West Africa, suggesting detailed plans for development there. At the time those three reports appeared in 1945, there existed in what are now the Colonial Territories and the Sudan (because we can include the Sudan for the purpose of this story as if it were a Colony), only two universities: one was the University of Malta—bombed, very nearly extinguished in the course of the war, and serving just that little island; the second, the University of Hong Kong; also on a small island, also bombed, looted, and little more than a shell of a building, with many of its staff killed in the early battles of the war or dead in internment—most had been interned—all its equipment destroyed, and the buildings without floors or stairways. The library, by a miracle, was preserved, through the devotion of the members of the library staff who had hidden it. Those were the two universities that then existed. There now exist three universities and five university colleges, all active, well housed, with big staffs and growing numbers of students. It is indeed a remarkable development in the course of little more than six years.

I should, perhaps, qualify that contrast, which I have deliberately made as dramatic as possible, by saying that in 1945 Ceylon was part of the Colonial Territories, and at that time had a university. Also, in the Colonial Territories of 1945, the Mandated Territory of Palestine should also be counted, and that, of course, had the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. But both have left the Colonial Territories, so my statement is literally true of the existing territories—two universities in 1945; eight university institutions now.

The Asquith Commission recommended that, as the basic plan for the development of higher education, universities should be established within the Colonies. The essence of its report is summarized in a paragraph, which I shall read:

"In the interests of higher education in the Colonies it is essential that universities should be established at as early a date as possible in those areas which are not now served by an existing university. The immediate objective is to produce men and women who have the standards of public service and the capacity for leadership which the progress of self-government demands, and to assist in satisfying the need for persons with professional qualifications required for the economic and social development of the Colonies."

The first question is, why local? If the need is to produce these professions for the new self-governing territories, why not train students in the established universities of this country? Well, the reply is given by the report, and is fairly obvious. For the purely practical reason that there just is not room. There was not room when the home universities were trying after the war to double the number of their own students, trying to get them up to eighty or ninety thousand; they



could not possibly have squeezed in the additional tens of thousands of Colonials needed for the development of self-government. On educational grounds too, it was not an appropriate answer to suggest that the home universities should meet this need. The gap between existing school systems in the Colonies and the school system here was too great, and it could not have had the normal linkage between school system and university. But those are practical reasons; there are also social and educational reasons. It is far better that the student should take his first degree, receive his primary training, among his own people, in conditions he knows, in conditions relevant to those in which he is going to use the particular skill or professional qualification which he is acquiring. It is surely inconceivable that any country aiming at independence, or self-sufficiency, should be content that the whole of its professional classes, the whole of its intelligentsia, should be trained abroad in a foreign country. It just does not make sense. It is as if we recruited all our civil servants from Harvard, and all our medical profession from Vienna. Surely no country would regard itself as independent or self-sufficient if it trained the whole of its leading class abroad?

But if the case is established for building up university institutions within the Colonies, why begin with universities? Why not an all-out attack on developing secondary schools and primary schools? There again the Commission gives a convincing reply, and, I think, fully establishes its case. It argues that where the educational system as a whole is backward, effort is most rewarding if it is directed at the highest level. Indeed, the question really assumes a false antithesis; there is no antithesis between any one part of the educational structure and any other part. Primary schools in the Colonies cannot develop unless the secondary schools are vigorous enough in their expansion to pour back into the primary schools additional teachers qualified to develop the primary schools. Secondary schools cannot develop unless the teacher-training institutions and universities are throwing back into the secondary schools better and better trained teachers. Universities cannot develop unless there is a flow upward from the secondary schools of a sufficient number of adequately qualified entrants. There is, therefore, no real antithesis; the whole broad front of education must advance together and in step; each part depends on the other and there is a complete inter-dependence among them. In any case, it is not historically true that you have to wait for a full development of the primary or secondary schools before you start the university. We did not in this country. Certainly when Oxford and Cambridge were founded, or Durham or London, or even with the great creation of universities at the turn of the nineteenth century we did not. Massachusetts in America did not wait for a full primary or secondary school system to be developed before it founded Harvard. The little group of professors who went out to Australia and founded Melbourne University did not wait for a full, tidy development of the secondary and primary school system. It just is not true that you have to wait on all the other parts to mature before you start a university. In any case, a university is much more than a teaching institution; it has many other functions and contributions to make, which I will discuss later.



Having, then, recommended that there should be universities established within the Colonies, the Asquith Commission proceeded to advise on the characteristics that they should have, the principles on which they should be built. I will mention the five main points that they made in their report. They said that universities must be of first-class standards, nothing bogus about them, nothing second-rate; they were to be real universities, because there could be no greater disservice rendered to the Colonies than to equip them with institutions which the rest of the university world would not recognize as universities, members of the family. Secondly, they advised most strongly that the universities should be fully residential. You cannot commute between Trinidad and Jamaica—1,000 miles—you have got to have a residential university. The huge distances in the Gold Coast, or any other part of Africa, mean that students must live in the University for purely practical reasons. It was not only on those grounds, but, of course, on educational grounds that the Commission, from the experience of this country, knew that one of the biggest contributions that university life can make is from that interaction of student on student, student on staff, staff on staff, that comes from living together in these years; senior and junior students studying together, learning together, living together, exchanging ideas, talking through the night. So they were to be residential universities.

They were to have a broad range of studies, and not to be merely technical shops; not an isolated medical school just producing doctors, or a separate engineering school producing engineers; they should be multi-faculty institutions. Doctors should grow up in their studies along with historians and classicists, so that they might be educated in the process and emerge not just as doctors, but as educated doctors. The historians should grow up along with engineers, vets and agriculturists. In a multi-faculty institution there would be that interplay of interests, not only at student level, but also at the staff level, with all the possibility of joint activities that produce fertilization of interests and co-operative efforts in research which arise naturally within an institution that has a broad range of studies and is investigating a broad range of problems.

They were to be autonomous. That, in British experience, goes without saying, but it is important to say it. They were not to be government institutions, but entirely self-governing, autonomous universities. There would be no hope of attracting the quality of man needed to staff them, no hope of their finding their own feet, unless they were entirely self-directing, self-governing institutions.

Lastly, they were to be centres of research; not merely of teaching, but centres of learning; real universities.

Those are the broad principles that the Asquith Commission laid down, and like all wise Commissions it proposed machinery to see that the programme was carried out. They were not content just to leave a White Paper; the White Paper recommended immediate action that should be taken, and machinery that could carry through the programme. There were three important pieces of machinery, and I will describe each of them briefly.

First, the Commission proposed an Inter-University Council for Higher

Education in the Colonies. That was established within a few months of the presentation of the Commission's report. The universities agreed, at the invitation of the Secretary of State, to create an organ of their own, a representative and inter-university organ, to see this programme through. It is indeed the first piece of central representative machinery which the British universities have created. They have a consultative Committee of Vice-Chancellors, but that is not, strictly speaking, representative. For the first time they created a piece of representative machinery for this purpose of assisting the development of Colonial higher education. The Council consists of a member from each university in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and a member from each of the existing Colonial universities. It places the advice and experience of the home universities at the disposal of these new Colonial bodies, and is ready to help in any way that it is invited to, or to initiate help if it sees an opportunity of so doing. Its work is largely concerned with the recruitment of staff for the new institutions. It advises on their constitutions, on their financial and administrative programmes, on their building plans. It runs a library service, assisting in the building up of the libraries. It arranges visits, not only by its own members, but by other academic specialists, to these Colonial institutions. I would say, looking back on these six years in which it has been in existence, that probably its greatest contribution—it is rather hard to define—is that it has made these new institutions feel part of the British university system. I do not think that a person going out to an academic post in the Gold Coast, the West Indies, Malaya or Khartoum feels he has in any way left the British university system; it is simply as if he were joining another British university, Sheffield or St. Andrews or Bangor. That is an extremely important contribution which the Council, and the universities behind it, have made, that these Colonial universities feel they are part of the British university system in this real and intimate way.

The second piece of machinery recommended by the Asquith Commission, and created, was a Colonial University Grants Advisory Committee; this is a technical committee advisory to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. It has advised on the expenditure of the £6,500,000 which the Colonial Office, from Colonial Development and Welfare funds, has placed at the disposal of this whole programme. Again, I think, looking back on its work, that its main contribution has been—drawing on British university experience—that it has always emphasized the importance of making contributions in the form of block grants, and leaving a high degree of responsibility to the institutions in the use it makes of the funds. There is a minimum of detailed ear-marking of the grant. Naturally, the institution has to establish its case, but, once it has done that, it is left a great degree of freedom. This system of block granting, which greatly reinforces the autonomy of these institutions, has been carried over into the principles on which local governments have financed these Colonial universities and colleges. In the Gold Coast two months ago, the Legislative Council voted the recurrent grant for the University College of the Gold Coast for the next five years as a block grant of over £500,000 a year, with no detailed

ear-marking. This is a principle which, I think, the Grants Committee at this end has by example and by encouragement managed to transfer into practice in the Colonies. Everyone who has had experience of annual estimates, annual budgeting, and all the other rigidity of normal Treasury practice, will know what an immense gain that has been for the institutions concerned, and will appreciate what a great degree of responsibility it places on them and what a great reinforcement of their freedom it represents.

The third piece of machinery has been provided by the University of London. The Asquith Commission had to ask itself: should these new institutions grant their own degrees, and become full universities from the start? The risk there was very great, because if a degree was not recognized by all the universities, if it did not, as of right, entitle its holders to come as post-graduate students to other universities, a great disservice would have been done to the Colonies. An entirely new university granting its own awards might not have been accepted by the rest of the university world. The Commission, therefore, turned to London, which alone of the British universities has the power of granting degrees to external students, and asked if it would make an arrangement by which students at these new institutions could take London degrees. London agreed to this, and made an invaluable modification in the existing external system. The defects of the external system are that the student has to pursue his studies on the basis of a syllabus relevant to this country but not adapted to any other, and that there is no direct contact between the teaching and the examining. By a scheme which we have learnt to call "Special Relationship", London has removed those two main defects. Under the scheme of "Special Relationship" the Colonial university college can propose to the University of London its own syllabuses; it can produce, for example, a history syllabus relevant to its own particular territory, and does not have to conform to one suitable for a person studying as a private student in Bath. There are now, for each of the five Colonial colleges, syllabuses in each subject specially adapted to the opportunities and needs of its own region. It is obvious that in the biological subjects you must have different fauna and flora as the basis of your teaching; it is less obvious in subjects like English or geography or history what changes should be introduced. But by a mutual process of thinking out the problems by the local staffs of the colleges and by the appropriate Boards of Studies in London, there have been developed no less than six hundred special syllabuses for the five university colleges. Those of you who have constructed even one syllabus will appreciate the immense amount of work that these six hundred represent.

The second defect is the divorce of examining from teaching. If you are teaching in a university college in this country, Leicester for example, you do not know what the examination is going to test your students on. You therefore have to try and cover the whole of the syllabus and that might lead to bad teaching, almost to cramming. But in the Colonial university colleges the staff are assistant examiners and they can, therefore, relate the examining to their teaching. This is much more sound academically, and it gets as close to the internal system of teaching in a college in London as is possible within the framework of the external

London degree. More than that; it means that these teachers in the Colonial colleges are, in close collaboration with experienced examiners in London, fixing their standards, learning the whole technique of examining, and getting ready for the time when they will award their own degrees and examine on their own authority. The system has worked extraordinarily well. It means that the students acquire a full London degree with no change in its standard whatsoever. It is guaranteed to be a full London degree and, therefore, a passport to the rest of the university world, but the content of the teaching is adapted, and is being continuously adapted, to meet local needs and opportunities. It is a fine piece of academic statesmanship and invention that London has shown in constructing and operating this system of "Special Relationship". I am sure that the colleges themselves are profoundly grateful for this work by London; they owe the University an inextinguishable debt.

What then is the present position? There are these three universities and five university colleges: Malta, Hong Kong and Malaya are full universities; the University College of the West Indies, the University College of the Gold Coast, Ibadan in Nigeria, Makerere College in East Africa, and the University College of Khartoum are the five university colleges. They have 3,998 students—I am sorry there are not two more just to get the round number. They have a staff of 672. They have beautiful sites; I wish I could describe each of them in turn. The West Indies: a site of 780 acres, a little delta about seven miles outside Kingston, Jamaica, lying with Long Mountain on one side and, behind, the great Blue Mountains going up to 6,000 or 7,000 feet, a most lovely sight. There is a gentle slope, which the architect has fully used for a ceremonial causeway, in the midst of the residential colleges. Grouped round one end are the academic buildings, and a little township of staff houses is at the other end. The Faculty Club is on the side of Long Mountain, from which there is a magnificent view of the full site. Nature has placed at the end of the site a little ledge, already flat, of about 70 acres, which has been made into playing fields, and which I am quite sure will be the site of the Olympic Games at some time; it is just made for it.

Then there are the colleges in the Gold Coast and Ibadan, each with sites of five square miles. Think what any university in this country would give if it could have a site of five square miles, instead of being pinched up like Manchester, Liverpool or Leeds on just a few acres. For these lovely spacious sites great plans for future development have been laid, and step by step the first stages are being carried out. Ibadan has already some of its halls of residence in full occupation, its science buildings complete and its library being built. The Gold Coast has its first hall of residence up on Legon Hill, behind Accra, with a view right out to sea. Hong Kong has rebuilt itself since the war; its great hall has been doubled in size and the University is now unrecognizable as that shell of itself that existed at the close of the war.

Development is not just a question of building, though if you were a principal of one of these places you would think you were a clerk of works, or a builder, as so much time is occupied with the vast material task of building. These places

are living communities and have staffs of great vitality. If you visit one you will find you are in the midst of a university society, engaged in its research, engaged in its teaching, often with a staff of as much as a hundred, as in the case of the Gold Coast or Ibadan, forming, with their wives and dependants, a little independent academic community.

Have they acquired the characteristics that the Asquith Commission set for them? To a large measure, they have. They have set themselves first-class standards, and I think they are getting near to achieving them. Those in the "Special Relationship" scheme have the guarantee that they are judged by London standards, and examination results, and all other such tests, show they are reaching them. The independent universities, like Malaya, are testing their own standards by means of external examiners. About ten external examiners visit the University of Malaya every year and apply the standards of the university in this country or Australia from which they come, and all say that the performance of the students is certainly that which they would expect to find from their own students.

In addition to this external assessment of the degree, the achievement of good standards is proved by the success of graduates of the University of Malaya, for example when they come here and test themselves against others for higher qualifications at the first attempt, one reason being, perhaps, that they have had to be better than that of many of their United Kingdom competitors. Several of the medical graduates coming here from Singapore have obtained their higher qualifications at the first attempt, one reason being, perhaps, that they have had such a wealth of clinical experience in their primary training, far greater than students in this country can get.

They are acquiring high academic standards; all of them except Malta are residential; and they all have a broad range of studies. For example, Khartoum has faculties of arts, science, medicine, veterinary, agriculture and engineering. None of them has exactly the same range as any other, but all have a range of three or four faculties and a sufficient spread of subjects to make a really enriching mixture of interests.

They are all autonomous. So far as it is possible to guarantee autonomy by their legal constitutions, they certainly are self-governing institutions. Academic policy is controlled entirely by the academic staff through a Senate or Academic Board. As I have mentioned already, their financing is in most cases by means of block grants, so that the donor does not determine, through financial control, policy or academic matters.

They are certainly centres of learning, not just teaching shops. They already have great libraries. At Ibadan, for example, there is a collection of 70,000 volumes, including great runs of journals; it already is a learned library. Some of them have institutes of research; the Institutes of Social and Economic Research, for example, at Makerere for East Africa, at Ibadan for West Africa and in the West Indies, are attached as integral parts of the colleges; there is an institute of physiological research at Makerere. But, of course, research is not just a matter of separate institutes or separate activities, it is a daily, normal

activity of all members of the staff. At any time you go there you will find that the staff want to talk to you about what they are doing, to show you the latest grasses they have identified or discovered, or the latest chemical analysis they have just completed, and so forth. There is active research proceeding in all the universities and colleges, and it is increasingly research which is related to local needs. For obvious reasons it is exciting to work on local problems, in the biological or medical sciences or in marine biology, as in the case of the Gold Coast where there is an almost unexplored marine shelf.

Most of the chemistry departments are working on the chemistry of natural products, working on local drugs, local products of different sorts. The history departments usually have active work proceeding on the histories of their immediate territories. They are taking a lead in the preservation of local archives and other historical material, because we have shamefully neglected our archives in the Colonies; we have let them disappear through climatic ravages, through insects, and just by man's destruction. The colleges and universities are trying to preserve the archives and to make possible work on regional history based on local documentation and the preservation of oral legend and other forms of historical material. At Makerere there is an art school, established by Mrs. Trowell, which also is trying to preserve local tradition, local skill, local interest in native forms of art. There is, then, plenty of local work emerging from this research activity. Indeed, one could not put down 600 or 700 actively-minded people in the midst of these opportunities and not expect something to happen of this character; certainly it is beginning to happen.

Although they are fulfilling the functions which the Asquith Commission expected of them, they are not conforming to a pattern in any way. One of the exciting things in visits to these places is to see how essentially different they all are, how each has a completely different character from the other. To go from Ibadan to the Gold Coast is more than going from Oxford to Cambridge; I will not attempt any other analogy else I might get into hot water. They are almost unrecognizably distinct and different, although basically they are doing the same job and carrying out the same programme.

I do not want to sound over-optimistic. Of course, there are stubborn problems, vast difficulties and vast defects. There is the unbalance resulting from the cost of the medical schools; I think we rue the establishment of Medical Faculties, because we find they eat up a quite disproportionate amount of the annual budget and capital sums available. Still, we have embarked on it, and we have got to pay the price. There is the poverty of the University College of the West Indies. Living in a group of territories, most of which are nearly bankrupt, its own income is very small; it can only move an inch at a time in its development programme, a very real problem for a territory as advanced as the Caribbean. There is the pitifully small number of women students in the African colleges. There were only two in the Gold Coast out of 150 when I was there in 1948 and half of them failed the examination! There is the danger of the isolation of these communities. Living together on their lovely sites, there is a danger that both staff and students may become rather inbred, removed from the local



communities, finding sufficient satisfaction among themselves. An effort is being made to counteract that; perhaps one of the best contributions has been made by the extramural departments, for the interaction on internal staff of the extramural department is beneficial. Many of the internal staff go out to take part in extramural teaching; still more, the extramural work brings into the college or university a whole new range of interests, contacts and experiences, which is very healthy, and creates a very close link with the local communities. Nevertheless, there is the real danger of these places being a little exotic, and too far removed from their local societies.

There is the unbalance in the distribution of students among the different faculties; far too few read for agriculture or veterinary surgery; too many want to be doctors. But that will solve itself in time, when numbers are sufficient to justify limiting the entry to the medical faculty and diverting students elsewhere, or when there is a change of heart in the student, of which there are already signs at Makerere where some students are beginning to put agriculture as their first option.

There is a great lack of provision for post-graduate fellowships and scholarships. If by establishing local universities, we expect, as the normal pattern, that a Colonial student will take his first degree locally, it follows, as a natural corollary, that he should have the opportunity of then going overseas, if he is good enough for post-graduate work. It would be tragic if, by the establishment of these Colonial universities and colleges, we cut students off from the social and cultural experience of studying overseas. At the moment there is a gap, because there is inadequate provision of post-graduate scholarships and fellowships, and we are not securing that the normal career for a student will be a local degree at his local college, followed by some period of overseas experience.

There is the problem that far too high a proportion of the students, when they leave the colleges or universities, go into government service. It is unhealthy for the societies they are serving. There ought to be a far greater flow out into the churches, into journalism, into private business, into farming and private agriculture, or into the armed services, and not just into government employment.

There are many problems; I could list many more, but I hope I have said enough to suggest that none of these places is complacent, or believes that it has nearly achieved the tasks it has set for itself.

Turning now to the wider setting of these university institutions in the societies that they are serving, I suggest that they are fulfilling extremely important social and political functions. Clearly, they are doing the obvious job of training; they are producing as yet only a trickle but the number will increase, doctors, administrators, teachers, veterinarians, agriculturists and engineers, to serve in their own territories and thus speed on the process of equipping those countries in readiness for self-government. Their training function is obvious and needs no elaboration. A second political function they are fulfilling is that they provide a meeting ground for different classes, communities and races. Within a casual group of students in the University College of the West Indies, you will find that one is from British Guiana, another from British Honduras, another from



Trinidad or Barbados, or maybe even from Turk's Islands. All of them by living together are beginning to see their own local problems in a wider setting, beginning to think Caribbeanwise, in a way that would not have been possible had they grown up only within their home territory. It is the beginning of a federal outlook, on a Caribbean scale, quite apart from the wider outlook on to a wider world, which they also get from the university.

In Malaya the university is the crucible of a new nation. Within it are Chinese, Malays, Tamils, Indians, Eurasians, all working together with the overriding, common purpose of study and devotion to learning, and from that, I believe, is beginning to emerge the possibility of a common Malay nation. It is the same in East Africa: Makerere serves Uganda, Kenya, Tanganyika and Zanzibar, and students from all these territories meet there for some years, living together, and getting an understanding about each other, a sense of toleration, which perhaps could not have occurred in any but an inter-territorial, university institution. That is an important political contribution which these universities and colleges are making.

They are also serving as centres of criticism. In the Colonies there are very few independent sources of opinion outside the government; the press is ludicrously poor in most places, and often not a source of constructive criticism or serious discussion. These free, disinterested university institutions are beginning to provide a source of independent discussion of local and wider issues. They provide a body of men who are available to serve as experts. In Hong Kong at the time of my visit there was a Commission of Enquiry into an explosion in the harbour on which the Professor of Chemistry from the University was serving, and the Professor of Economics was chairman of a trade dispute commission after a local strike; nobody else was available who had the confidence of both sides. It is important, at this time of social, political and economic development, that there are now bodies of persons known to be disinterested and available for such public services. The universities are thus proving to be valuable, independent sources of criticism and of experts.

They are also beginning to establish and strengthen a conception of standards, both in the sense of professional standards and in the sense of intellectual standards, the distinguishing between what is bogus and what is genuine. A further example of the important political and social functions which they may discharge is that they may well prove to be one of the strongest links with this country which endures when these territories reach the stage of full independence, either in or outside the Commonwealth. There is a normal flow of contacts within the university world which will long survive any political changes. I shall be surprised if the University College of Khartoum is not one of the most important links between this country and the Sudan long after the Sudan has changed its political and constitutional status.

Can we then achieve what the Asquith Commission suggested should be the long-term programme for higher education in the Colonies? It is a great race against time; the universities and colleges have had to develop at breath-taking speed, because they have got to achieve their position as independent institutions

before political events overtake them. I think that one reason for their success, or at least for the partial success of the programme up to date, has been the direct link with the home universities. The Government has stepped aside and left the main direction of the work to academics. I do not mean that academics are more efficient than government officials; they are not; but in this particular field there has been established an intimate relationship among people who talk the same language, talk the same shop, and are dealing with common professional tasks. The link is direct between the Colonies and the universities, not up through the Government and down again to get expert advice. The Inter-University Council is wholly academic and the Grants Committee is almost wholly academic in its composition. The relationship with the University of London is not just a formal, paper, administrative link; it is a meeting of men and women talking together of their own interests and talking a common language. It is this great range of personal contacts with the university world that has been established which, to a great extent, accounts for the speed with which it has been possible to make the advance that has taken place so far in Colonial higher education.

Above all, our gift from home has been to try to ensure that these places have freedom. Our relationship is purely advisory; the Inter-University Council may advise a particular course but the college concerned is entirely free to reject the advice, and very often does, especially the Gold Coast. The colleges must learn to make their own mistakes; they can only get responsibility by using it. It is essential that all our relationships with the Colonial people should be on this basis of freedom. We can assist them to establish their standards; we can give the best that we have, but we know they will change and be utterly different from what we expect them to be or plan that they should be. We can merely place at the disposal of these countries such knowledge as we have, and through the universities give it in an unqualified way and without reserve, knowing that knowledge for them is an important source of power.

We are dealing here with the most precious of all the resources of these under-developed territories, their human resources. Through these universities and university colleges, we can do much to release the energies that are represented by these human resources and by so doing release something that will enormously speed up their whole social and political advance.

I want to end on a note of combined disappointment and hope. I have described, very briefly and inadequately, the universities or university institutions. Malaya: this new nation has its university. The West Indies, moving towards federation, has an inter-territorial, a federal, university college, serving the whole of the Caribbean. The Gold Coast, very near the goal of self-government, has its university institution. Nigeria has its university institution; it may play a small part in holding those three regions together of the north, the west and the east, as it is an inter-regional body, a national university. Even East Africa, far removed though it may be from self-government, has its university institution. But there is nothing in Central Africa; there is a huge gap. Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, perhaps about to be federated, about to be something like a new Dominion, have not a single institution of

higher education within their three territories. It is a very big gap in the story, a tragic gap, because, not only is there no institution within the three territories providing post-secondary, higher, education, but, from the end of this year—1953—the Union of South Africa has placed a ban on all non-European students coming from outside; no African student from those three territories can go to a Union school, college or university after the end of this year. The Federal Service of the new federation, if it comes into being, is to be open to all persons regardless of race, but if an African cannot get to a Union university, and has no university of his own within his own territories, he cannot even get the minimum qualifications of entrance for the senior Federal Service. So it is a little unreal to talk of equal entrance to the Federal Service, if some who may wish to enter cannot get in because they have no means of acquiring the necessary qualifications.

Here, in these Central African territories, are communities needing and wishing to live together; what a great contribution to this end it would be if, as in the West Indies or Malaya, they had a university in which their youth could live together in their formative years. Africans and Europeans could grow up understanding each other, tested against a common task of study, and learning toleration, so that the leaders of the next generation would have learnt each other's standards, as they could do through a university that was inter-racial in its composition. Here is one of the biggest opportunities for university work in the whole of the Colonies; one of the best and most constructive opportunities for that partnership which lies ahead for these three Central African territories. It would be a dramatic climax to the whole story of our work since the war, if the United Kingdom could complete its very great contribution to Colonial higher education, and, at this moment, endow and equip the Central African territories with a university, as part of its guarantee that this will be a federation based on partnership. It would not cost very much for the buildings and equipment; the capital required in most of the other places has been £1,500,000.

I go further, and make one practical suggestion, entirely on my own responsibility. One great weakness in the Colonial universities has been that they have not had endowments. Some have had small endowments, but none of these eight institutions that now exist has the independence which only a substantial endowment can provide. They therefore depend on local grants and though those have been given freely and generously, and so far without any ties or control, nevertheless, the position is not without danger. To do the job properly, I should like to see our country not only give the capital required for the buildings, the equipment, the library, of a university for Central Africa, but also endow the new university with something substantial—£5 million—to produce a stable income of its own as a firm security for its finances and a fundamental basis for its independence. It could then go confidently ahead with its huge task of partnership in practice. £5 million: one-third of the cost of an aircraft carrier; the cost of two destroyers, a tiny price for a very big thing.

THE CHAIRMAN: We are most deeply indebted to Mr. Adams for the masterly survey that he has given us of the new universities and university colleges in our Colonies. He has given it with the lucidity of the true expert.

I should like, if I may, to say three things. The first is, how proud anybody here must be who belongs to the University of London, which has been the godmother of these new institutions, and how appropriate it is that this address should have been given to us in London.

My second point is this: I glanced round this room and I saw the inscription over the door about this house having been bombed in 1941 and restored in 1947, and seeing that made me feel, in spite of what our lecturer has rightly said about the gaps and the difficulties confronting these new institutions, that we can, as a people, be proud that this great development has taken place in these difficult post-war years.

Lastly, I should like to refer to that striking phrase the lecturer used, "the crucible of a new nation", when he was referring to the University of Malaya. Knowing, as we do, that university education gives deep satisfaction to the peoples of these countries, and knowing, as we do, the satisfaction that it gives to all of us who care for our moral responsibility as a nation at the centre of this Commonwealth; knowing that a university education is, as it was in the days of Erasmus, something far transcending national or racial divisions, may we not hope that the universities and university colleges, which the Inter-University Council assists so wisely, may be the crucible of a new Commonwealth?

*The vote of thanks to the Lecturer was carried with acclamation.*

SIR SELWYN SELWYN-CLARKE, K.B.E., C.M.G. (Chairman, Commonwealth Committee): I would ask your permission to associate the Commonwealth Section of the Royal Society of Arts with your praise and thanks to Mr. Walter Adams, for his very thought-provoking and immensely interesting address.

It gives me very great pleasure this afternoon to move a vote of thanks to our Chairman for presiding over this important meeting. There are not very many people here this afternoon, but I should like to assure Lord Hemingford and Mr. Walter Adams that a transcript of the proceedings will go to some 6,000 members scattered all over the world, so some of these vital thoughts expressed by Mr. Walter Adams will not be just shared by those here to-day, but will go to a very wide circle.

I first had the pleasure of meeting Lord Hemingford some twenty-seven years ago, when he came to the Gold Coast to be a master at the Prince of Wales College, Achimota, with my old friend, Mr. Alec Fraser, as the principal. The late General Sir Gordon Guggisberg (referred to by the lecturer) of revered memory, was the Governor of the Colony at that time, and I know that you would like me to tell you that his name, and that of his widow, is invariably mentioned by West Africans in terms of the very deepest affection and respect. It is to the lasting honour of that great Colonial administrator that his was the conception of a West African College at Achimota. Here small boys and girls were taught in the vernacular, and older students were trained right up to the intermediate university standard; a special emphasis being laid on social service and good citizenship. I learnt to-day, for the first time, that we are largely indebted to Lady Moore-Guggisberg, whom we are so pleased to welcome here to-day, for the fact that Achimota was started with lady teachers as well as male teachers. I think it had been anticipated that the association of male and female teachers might have the inevitable results; which, indeed, it did.

Lord Hemingford himself was the first Honorary Secretary of the Junior Red Cross, which was established in the Gold Coast in 1932; an example of social service. I claim this, without fear of contradiction, that the influence and example of people like our Chairman in raising the standard of culture, and in imbuing the young Africans with a spirit of responsibility and public service, has made it possible for a peaceful revolution in constitutional government to take place in the Gold Coast since the end of the Second World War.

After devoting thirteen years to this groundwork, following the precepts of the late Dr. Ecrey with his famous simile of black and white notes played on the piano to make a harmony, Lord Hemingford was asked to take over the Headmastership of the Church Mission Society, King's College, in Uganda. He worked there for another nine years, and in 1949 returned to this country, where he is devoting his remaining years to valuable work on voluntary organizations concerned with Colonial affairs.

Lord Hemingford typifies, to my mind, the brilliant academician, who spurned the greater comforts and rewards of his homeland to give the best part of his life to the underprivileged, in fever-ridden lands, as they then were.

On behalf of this assembly and the Commonwealth Section of this Society, I move a very warm and hearty vote of thanks to him.

*The vote of thanks to the Chairman was carried with acclamation and the meeting then ended.*

## G E N E R A L   N O T E S

### SOME SUMMER EXHIBITIONS

Several pictures of exceptional quality are to be seen in Frank Sabin's galleries Rutland Gate, Knightsbridge, where the summer exhibition is dominated by a group of Venetian paintings. Originally in the Emperor Rudolph's Prague collection, *Salome with the Head of John the Baptist*, given to Giorgione, shows the master's distinctive hand in the angular folds of Salome's cloak, and at the same time is most interesting in the way attention is drawn to Salome's averted gaze by the curious glance of her attendant. Titian's large *Saint Margaret with the dragon*, seen against Venice in flames, is a work of extreme virtuosity, though the eye actually rests with greater satisfaction on a free sketch after the picture by Van Dyke, who is also represented by a superbly assured portrait of the Bishop of Ghent, wearing a Venetian red mantle over a grey cloak. Tintoretto's late painting of *The Raising of Lazarus*—alike in the flickering light, the undulating rhythm of the nearer figures, and the mysterious distant groups on either side of the Saviour—proclaims an innovator whose mood accords with our romantic day.

At the Leger Galleries is a collection of early English paintings, the most intriguing canvas here being a curious rather than a masterly production. *A View of the Hustings, Covent Garden*, seems to have been left unfinished by Hogarth, the foreground figures having been subsequently heightened and embellished by the Academician Edward Penny. These are mostly identifiable, prominent being Garrick with Comedy on his arm, but turning to Dr. Johnson who is resplendent in an improbable waistcoat of scarlet and gold. More important are Constable's candid portraits of Mrs. Tuder, her daughter Mrs. Edwards, and Dr. Walker, and the quarter-length of *John Purling* in a feigned oval by Gainsborough.

In contrast to this exhibition, which appeals as much to students of human nature and manners as to the judge of painting, the collection at Colnaghi's is primarily of interest to connoisseurs of early and less familiar European masters. The most imposing work here is a Triptych (the centre panel a Deposition) by the Master of Frankfort, an early sixteenth-century design revealing Mannerist tendencies typical of the master's later work; while the most elegant painting, without doubt, is a little canvas representing *The Birth of St. John the Baptist*, with a firmly modelled and subtly lit figure on the left, by Francesco Solimena.

Interspersed with more recent paintings may also be seen some admirable nineteenth-century works at Tooth's in Bruton Street. Here John Crome betrays his affection for seventeenth century Dutch landscape art in *The Woodcutters*, as

well as for broad sunlit sails far out beyond the breakers in his *Yarmouth Old Jetty*, in which one can almost savour the salty tang; while from the French works one might single out Lépine's airy view of a path leading through a heath and gravel pits, which shows the waning influence of his master Corot.

August is always a quiet month for contemporary art in town, and for that reason a welcome exhibition of Australian art at the New Burlington Galleries is in danger of being neglected. In fact, it is the first official exhibition of contemporary Australian painting to be shown here, the twelve artists having been selected by the Conference of Interstate Gallery Directors, and the exhibition sponsored by the indefatigable Arts Council.

The two most conspicuous painters, Sidney Nolan and Russell Drysdale, have been seen in London previously. Nolan shows his parched wildernesses, reproducing their knolls with imaginative effect in the withered corpses of cattle, and has, besides, some naive evocations of the life of the Victorian bushranger Ned Kelly. Drysdale sees eroded tree-trunks with something of Paul Nash's vision; and, for the rest, William Dobell's portraiture is least demonstrative and most intense in one or two smaller works, Constance Stokes, imparting a golden glow to her monumental figures, has an impressive *Girl in Red Tights*, and Frank Hinder two imaginative abstractions in tempera. Together they bear witness to one of the most interesting flowerings of serious painting in the Commonwealth.

NEVILLE WALLIS

## NOTES ON BOOKS

SYNTHETIC RESINS AND ALLIED PLASTICS. *Edited by R. S. Morrell, 3rd ed. O.U.P., 1951. 50s*

A GUIDE TO PLASTICS. *By C. A. Redfarn. Iliffe & Sons, 1952. 7s 6d*

When the late Dr. Morrell gathered together a distinguished band of contributors and produced the first edition of *Synthetic Resins and Allied Plastics* in 1937, it is not too much to say that he produced a classic.

The second edition was published in the difficult days of the war in 1943 with a second impression in 1944. Now, in this third edition, much new material has been added to almost every chapter while an additional chapter has been added on Shellac.

It would require an expert on experts to give a detailed critical review of this book. It is not only a valuable reference book, but critical reviews are given of the various theories of resin formation and developments in high polymer research.

With the continuing and increasing research on plastics, there is no doubt that a fourth edition will be required in a few years' time. The production of the book is of the high standard that one has learned to expect from the Oxford University Press.

*A Guide to Plastics* appeared as a "first edition" in limited form, namely as a series of charts in 1943. The opportunity has been taken to bring the charts up to date and to add a most useful text. It is useful not only to the technical student, but also as a reference book, and it can be understood by the layman. The charts and diagrams are well drawn with clear descriptions.

There is a very useful chapter on British Standards relating to the industry, which shows how much has been done to ensure that many plastics materials may be produced to recognized standards of quality.

There is also a useful table of properties with a comparison with some of the more common metals. The book is very well produced and is reasonably priced.

W. E. DE B. DIAMOND

## SHORT NOTES ON OTHER BOOKS

THE STUDIO BOOK OF ALPHABETS. *Studio publications*, 1953. 5s

This admirable little book contains 67 complete alphabets, most of them showing lower case and numerals as well as capitals. The greater number are printing types, but some are hand-drawn, and of these some are here first published. The name of the typefounder or designer is given in each case, with the name of the alphabet.

MAGIC BOOKS FROM MEXICO. *Penguin books*, 1953. (*King Penguin book no. 64.*) 4s 6d

Sixteen beautiful coloured plates reproduced from the magic books of Mexico are here published with an introduction, and notes explaining the meaning of the drawings with their complex symbolism, by C. A. Burland.

TEN THOUSAND MEN OF AFRICA. By R. A. R. Bent. *H.M.S.O. for the Bechuanaland Government*, 1952. 8s 6d

The history of the Bechuanaland pioneers and gunners from 1941 to 1946 tells of the unit's service in the Middle East and Italy. It is illustrated with maps and with a number of photographs.

BRITISH AND AMERICAN TAPESTRIES. By Mary Eirwen Jones. *Tower Bridge publications*, 1952. 25s

This account, mainly of the development of British tapestries, from Mortlake to Merton Abbey, starts with a brief history of the art from the earliest times, and a description of how tapestry is made. It closes with a note on American tapestries and embroidered pictures. There are forty plates.

## FROM THE JOURNAL OF 1853

VOLUME I. 19th August, 1853

*From the official American Report of the Great Exhibition of 1851*

Perhaps the industrial products of no two countries which ever existed, presented so many points of strong contrast as did those of Russia and the United States at the Exhibition. In the one case, everything which was shown was costly; in the other cheap. The compartments of Russia, splendidly fitted up and appointed, were attractive from the princely magnificence of the articles displayed. The compartments of the United States, on the contrary, decorated with great plainness, drew admiration from those who visited them, by the adaptability of every thing they contained for the purposes for which they were intended. Thousands never ceased to gaze with wonder on jewels, embroidery, velvets, silks, and furs contributed from the various imperial establishments of St. Petersburg and Moscow. There were others, however—and they too were counted by thousands before the Exhibition closed—who found in the water-pails, made by machinery, and furnished at one-quarter the usual price;—in the pegged boots and shoes, between the upper leather and soles of which not a wax-end was drawn;—in the improved household, barn, garden, and field implements;—in the bell telegraphs, and spring chairs, and cooking ranges, and hot-air furnaces, and camp bedsteads;—a degree of intelligent interest excited by the display in no other part of the building. The Russian exhibition was a proof of the wealth, power, enterprise, and intelligence of Nicholas; that of the United States, an evidence of the ingenuity, industry, and capacity of a free and educated people. The one was an ukaz of the emperor to the notabilities of Europe; the other, the epistle of a people to the working-men of the world.



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